News From Somewhere

by
Project Alphistia
August 25, 2025
Volume 1, Number 4
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Hopium in Chimeraville

I've always known I was different. I've been aware of that since I was nine years old, when I invented the Alphistian alphabet and soon after, created my own country.

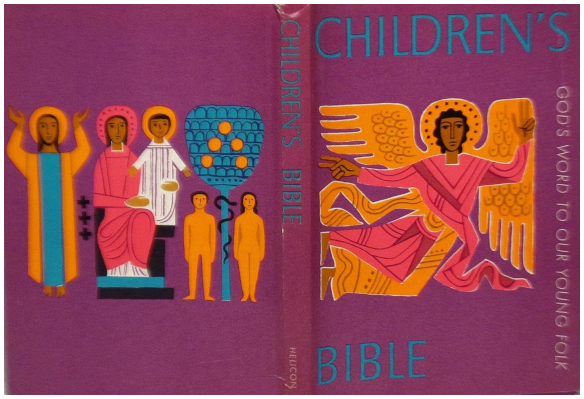
That was 58 years ago, and God willing, I'll wander around for a bit longer in this land of my own invention. For how long, well none of us really ever knows how long we've got. My friend Seth has agreed to take my ashes to Thingvellir in Iceland when the time comes, so I can then rest in peace without being bothered by this crazy world anymore. Google Thingvellir and you can see why that will be a nice place to be for eternity…

In the meantime, I live with hope and illusions, or as I prefer to call them: Hopium in Chimeraville. Religion is the opium of the people as a notable commie once said, and he was right It's why I'm an atheist. But how can we NOT decline into delusions when we look around us? So Chimeraville is just the right place for me.

The capital of Alphistia is Enteve,not Chimeraville, but my "reality" as such, is a vast game of pretend. When I describe in this newsletter and elsewhere everything I imagine about Alphistia in ocd detail, I'm fully aware that the chances are almost nil any of my ideas will ever come to pass. Please though, don't take away my hopium…I'm addicted. I need to do these projects. They keep me going, for myself and as my gift to the world (hubris?) My drawings, sketches, outlines, maps etc…all these artifacts make me happy, and I like to share them. Some day my message in a bottle might make sense to someone somewhere, and they'll do something. There has to be something better than the kakistocracy where we live in 2025.

A Vision in Color

When I was around seven, I grabbed a book from my aunt's house called "The Children's Bible". Her kids weren't interested in it in the slightest, but I was then a very devout Catholic boy. It wasn't the myths described that drew me to the book, but the gorgeous drawings in color. I absolutely adored them.



After I hoarded the book for years, my aunt made me give it back, since she

was malicious and capricious. It wasn't until decades later, once the internet came along, that I located a copy of it for myself. I still can page through it enraptured by its unique art and colorful illustrations.

n six days God made heaven and earth
and the seas and all that is in them. On
the seventh day he rested. And for this
reason God blessed and sanctified the
seventh day.

For those who've seen my drawings through the years, it's clear that my sense of color is not just innate, but inspired by "The Children's Bible". The artist was a German by the name of Johannes Gruger, a devout Catholic who drew primarily religious themes, in a style influenced by medieval illustrated manuscripts.

Growing up in the Midcentury Modernism period, I was drawn to the colors and style of ads, cartoons, graphics, and design of that period. That was partly to escape the dreariness of so much of my surroundings from walking around in Newport, Kentucky in the mid-60s. It was a glum, cluttered, ugly landscape in a fog of blue cigarette smoke and pollution from a large nearby steel mill. I needed color. Luckily my mom gave me a box of Crayola 64 color crayons and magic markers from Kresges. I could draw to my heart's content.

Cozycore

We are inundated by ads and marketing from the moment we wake up each day to when we fall asleep, ad infinitum, ad nauseum. There are plenty of distractions, and those are marketed to us too. One is the idea of "cozycore"...creating an environment around oneself based on purchases of goods and services that make us feel contented and safe. It's primarily marketed to women. In America, that's about as far as things can go…buying happiness.

In the last issue of "News from Somewhere" I wrote about gezelligheid and hygge, Northern European concepts of how to live, based not on purchases, but moments, experiences, companionship, moods, and/or environments. "Gezellig" is a Dutch word meaning "cozy"...but much more. "Hyggelig" is the Danish word for it. Of course in the last 15 years or so, the idea has been hyped in the US, with cute books, cards, candles and other objects…all for sale. Like many fads, most of the artifacts can be now found for a dollar in thrift shops. Which is about the real value of the stuff.

Alphistia would be part of this "gezellig/hygge/koselig/mysig zone" of the world. Not a market, but a way of living. The French don't have a word for it, but they do have the concept: "savoir vivre"...the Italians have "La Dolce Vita". For weeks I've wondered…what should the Alphistian word be? I've come up two: "zhante" and "kosele". The first comes from an "old" Alphistian word for "soft", the other is a tribute to Norwegian's "koselig". (painting by Carl Larsson, a Swede).

Pushkin is the Dinner Host

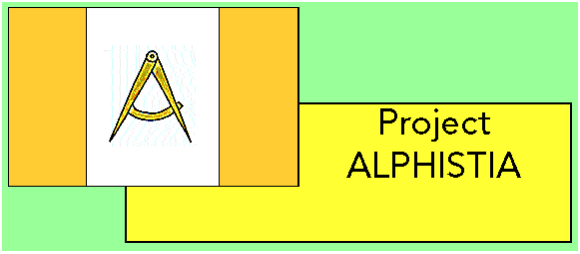
On Sunday nights, my friend Vanya and I rotate cooking supper for each other. When I do it, Pushkin is the “host”. Whenever I unfold my dining table and spread the tablecloth, within moments he’s made himself the CENTERPIECE! Which is how things should be, because he is so beautiful and loving. At first when Vanya arrived in town this summer, Pushkin was so curious he liked to try to join us on the table when the food was served and we tried to eat…but he’s a quick learner and now will sit on a side table next to us…he doesn’t want to be a bother, after all. It’s all very “kosele” as Alphistians say. 😁

Alphistia Website

Earlier this year, Alphistia’s website collapsed after another attack from bots. I could no longer access the admin system and users were prompted for a userid and password, which of course was ridiculous for a public website. I was able to cancel the account with the vendor, but I lost a lot of content. I’ve had a website since the early days of the internet…Seth Bookey created it for me in the summer of 1995. Truth be told, the website was static, but at least google searches of the word Alphistia did direct right to it.

For now I have a free site through google, but it’s not elaborate. As time goes on I’ll see about reclaiming the domain name. For the near future it’s at: https://sites.google.com/view/alphistia/

The site is barebones, and I’m relying more on the blog and bluesky for updates, as well as this newsletter. At the moment, access to the Alphistian language dictionaries is available only through The Wayback Machine. Trist! (Sorry!)



(*header of the Alphistia website for many years*)

The Basics Explained

-Alphistia should develop into a self-governing nation with its own territory.

-Alphistia should have a written basic law (constitution) and a national law code.
-Alphistia's system of government should be a republic, with democratically elected representatives that meet regularly in a national parliament and local assemblies.
-Elections would be scheduled at regular intervals, using a system or proportional representation. There would be multiple political parties.
-The constitution would include a charter of civil rights, as well as political and social rights guaranteed for all citizens.
-Alphistia would adhere to international norms of human rights. The death penalty would be forbidden.
-Alphistian society would encourage the all-round development of individuals and families. Work would be balanced with free time to provide opportunities for learning and leisure to all.
-The Alphistian economic system would be based on profit-making and not-for-profit cooperatives, state-owned energy and natural resources, and private companies regulated by the state.
-Alphistia would develop a welfare state, providing universal social services to all.
-Alphistia should have humane living conditions. Towns should be reasonably sized without extreme density, according to city-in-a-garden principles that encourage use of transit, bicycles, and walking. All motor vehicles would be electric.
-Alphistia would have a comprehensive railway system, entirely electrified, supplemented by tram systems in the biggest cities, and electric buslines connecting villages and towns to the trains.
-Housing would be provided to all on a non-profit basis. Rents would be capped to 25% of household income. Homes would be built mostly in low-rise but medium density districts, so that residents can walk to local shops, schools, services, parks, and cultural facilities.
-Alphistian culture will develop best in its own language. English would be used to communicate with the world outside, but would not be the official language.
-Schools should prepare students for working life, but also instill a lifelong love for learning.
-Women would be equal partners to men in all aspects of political, economic, and social life in our country.
-The LGBT+ community would have full equal rights in Alphistian society, including same-sex marriage, adoption rights, and gender-affirming care.
-Alphistians would be free to have any religious beliefs, or none at all. Church and state would be separate.
-Alphistia would welcome people from all over the world, from any racial, ethnic, or religious background who agree with the basic beliefs and norms of our society.

Comments welcome at
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